The Gentleman's Mag:
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THOUGHTS

ON THE

INEXPEDIENCY

AND

DANGEROUS TENDENCY

OF THE

MEASURES RECOMMENDED

BY

MODERN REFORMERS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR VERNOR AND HOOD, BIRCHIN-LANE,
CORNHILL.

1795.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following ſheets were written during the late ſevere froſt without any view to publication. Some friends, whoſe judgments I have been in the habit of reſpecting, thought they might be uſeful, and wiſhed them to be laid before the Public. It was a ſufficient motive to induce me to put this orphan into their hands, ſoliciting only for him that patronage to which his merit may entitle him.

It is unneceſſary here to ſay, that *all* objections brought by cavillers againſt our Conſtitution, have not been attended to; this fruitleſs labour I have declined: nor has *every* argument that might be brought

brought forward in ſupport of thoſe which are attended to, been inſiſted on, as reaſoning appears to be thrown away where the futility of the argument is obvious. Nothing further ſeems neceſſary for the rejection of a Propoſition, after ſhewing that it cannot anſwer the end propoſed. This has been my intention, how far I have ſucceeded muſt be left to the determination of the reader. Wrapped in the conſciouſneſs of my own integrity, I ſhall be ſatisfied with the event whatever that may be. Should one friend be added to ſupport that Conſtitution, the bleſſings of which I feel, or even the courſe of one malignant dart diverted that was levelled againſt it, my labours will be ſufficiently rewarded; but if failing in theſe, I ſhall yet enjoy the ſatisfaction ariſing from the reflection of having aimed at ſuch a mark.

THOUGHTS

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ON THE

INEXPEDIENCY AND DANGEROUS TENDENCY OF THE MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY MODERN REFORMERS.

HOWEVER the life of man may be ſhortened ſince the creation, the powers of the mind remain the ſame.—The extended ſpan of the Antideluvians left them, at the concluſion of it, no wiſer than the contracted one of the moderns. They both alike declare, that the wiſeſt live only long enough to learn that they know nothing; the untutored Indians of our day are probably in the ſame ſituation as thoſe that were firſt diſcovered by our anceſtors; and a Lock, or a Newton, if born among them, would remain undiſtinguiſhed, but by his courage or ferocity, qualifications in which the tyger would exceed them. It is at the ſame time certain, that as vaſt a difference between the capacious mind of a Newton, and that of an Indian

Chief, ſubſiſts, as between any two things within the reach of the human capacity. The queſtion which this conſideration naturally ſuggeſts is, whence this amazing difference? Originally the ſame what could have produced ſuch a diſtinction, within the narrow ſpan of human life; the fact, however wonderful, is indubitable: it is equally clear that it has ariſen from man; for it is certain we all came originally from the Creator's hand the ſame; we all flowed from the power and goodneſs of one common parent, who, free from imperfection, could not be actuated by partiality, and whoſe affections therefore muſt be the ſame to all.

If the ſavage and the civilized ſtart alike from one common central point, diverging like rays from the ſun, increaſing their diſtance as they advance till their reſemblance is nearly loſt, it ſeems worth enquiring, what is the principle that cauſes the ſeparation.

If knowledge is the point of attention, both cannot be right, neither in fact are they both wrong; for if one remains without making any advances towards it, while the other is continually approaching, the queſtion is anſwered, when we have aſſigned to each it's proper ſtation. That

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the Indian of this day is, in point of knowledge, preciſely the ſame, with the Indian of two thouſand years ago, muſt be granted; the line at reſt therefore is the Savage, and that which advances towards knowledge the Civilized. This idea may, I think, be thus illuſtrated; ſuppoſe the ſavage, or ſtate of nature, to be repreſented by an horizontal line on the ground, and that of knowledge, by a parallel one, at an immenſe height, while a line gradually aſcending repreſents civilization; it is obvious that the lower horizontal line, drawn to whatever length you pleaſe, can never approach, in the leaſt, the upper parallel, whereas the aſcending or line of civilization, in proportion to it's elevation and extent, *does*, preciſely in the ſame degree as it leaves the lower or ſavage line. Infinite as the diſtance which muſt ever remain, between the higheſt pitch to which our preſent knowledge can attain, and that to which it may be extended hereafter, yet the mind of a Newton, ſurveying that of a Savage, muſt look from a tremendous height,—a height, the offspring of civilization; ſoaring as the human mind does, can it look down upon the humiliating ſpot from whence it ſprang, with a wiſh to deſcend again to it's original ignorance.

If this is a fair ſtate of the caſe, what is there

in the natural ſtate of man, that ſhould make it the great criterion by which all government is to be tried. Two beings more different hardly exiſt, than an Antideluvian, and a Modern Man, both as to their conceptions, wants, and poſſeſſions; and can their rights be the ſame? With arts and ſciences, luxury has increaſed, as a natural conſequence; and as every pleaſure brings ſome want along with it, theſe have been in an equal ſtate of progreſſion; in one ſtate, the ſtrength of one man being reſtrained from overbearing the weakneſs of another, all is done; but in the other every paſſion, aided by all the art and cunning that experience and refinement have produced, muſt be controuled. So far are theſe reſtraints from ariſing out of the rights of man in a ſtate of nature, that they are produced by ſituations unknown to it, and even ſome of them can only exiſt by a ſurrender of them. Man, governed by his reaſon, wants no reſtraint: this, however, is a being no where to be found; but where the ſceptre is in the hands of our paſſions, the happineſs of each individual muſt depend on the reſtraints impoſed on others. The reſtraints of paſſion can never be conſidered as an infringement of liberty, at leaſt of *that* which conduces to human happineſs, and which can alone be deſirable.

That

That the root of any law now exiſting could not be found vegetating in the days of Adam, is no proof that it is not good, or conſequently, that it ſhould be eradicated. It is curious to obſerve, to what point this principle would carry us, if uniformly purſued. What ſhould we ſay to the man, who objected not only to thoſe changes which faſhion ſuggeſts in our dreſs or buildings, but even to our wearing any convenient cloaths, or inhabiting any houſes at all, becauſe the ancient inhabitants of this iſland lived in leafy huts, and covered themſelves with deer-ſkins and red paint. *Theſe* were however improvements upon Adam, and yet civilization has not certainly more refined our bodies, than our minds!

When therefore we hear the modern advocates for the rights of man making their appeal to him in a ſtate of nature, we cannot but pity their want of wiſdom and conſiſtency; our wants in a natural ſtate were few, and our reſtraints of courſe few alſo, but ineffectual to prevent us from immediately rebelling againſt the laws of our maker, and imbruing our hands in brothers blood. Is this a period to be reſorted to, or thoſe laws to be taken as a pattern for theſe, by which we ſhould wiſh to be governed? I think therefore that we may aſſume it as an axiom, that it is no objection to a modern conſtitution

conſtitution that it bears no reſemblance to that of Adam.

With all the reverence that is due to our ancient parent, we will now take leave of our progenitor, and his laws and rights together, admiring that moderation which made him ſatisfied with them, which, in the company of many others, have long ſince winged their flight from this our world. Our knowledge, powers, wants and deſires, have increaſed from that day to this; and if with them, our powers of ſupply and reſtraint have not kept pace, we have been growing wiſer and richer without being happier, a creed to which ſelf-importance will reluctantly ſubſcribe.

It will be granted that every ſubject, in proportion to it's importance has a claim to our attention: after the duty we owe to God, ſtands that we owe to our neighbour. I do not here forget ourſelves, becauſe we are involved in and influenced from theſe; the love of God and man naturally inſuring perſonal happineſs, being equally parts of one great law, the obedience to which ſecures to us that bleſſing which conſtitutes it. The inſtituting thoſe laws which ſecures the happineſs of our neighbour is a duty incumbent on us, or in other words the framing and ſupporting any government, producing this

this end, ſhould receive our utmoſt ſupport, nor on ſlight or frivolous pretences be oppoſed.

This leads us naturally to enquire how far our modern reformers are juſtified in their preſent oppoſition?

What are the evils they complain of; and if they exiſt, are they of ſufficient magnitude to juſtify the reſiſtance they make?

What the remedies they propoſe, and how far they are likely to anſwer the end?

And, whether this is the proper time to attempt a reformation, ſuppoſing one to be neceſſary?

We are firſt to conſider then What are the evils complained of? and, if they exiſt, Whether they are of ſufficient magnitude to juſtify reſiſtance?

The ſhortening the duration of Parliament, and a more equal Repreſentation, are the grand points that ſeem to be aimed at; and I will candidly own that, I believe theſe comprehend the whole wiſh of ſome of the Leaders of Oppoſition, whoſe integrity has induced them to leave thoſe Societies, with whom they acted up to this point, but which, on ſome recent occaſions diſcovered the cloven foot too plain to be miſtaken. The numbers of thoſe who remained in thoſe Societies, compared with others, who ſo much to their honor abandoned them, while

while it ſhews what would have been the conſequence of their remaining in full force, backed by that reſpectability which having abandoned them they now brand with the opprobious name of Apoſtates, muſt convince every unprejudiced mind, of the danger we have eſcaped, and of the neceſſity there was for thoſe meaſures which have ſo recently been adopted for our ſecurity.

Without cenſuring the conduct of thoſe jurymen whoſe verdict declared the delinquents not worthy of death, it is clear that we were in a train that would have infallibly proved fatal to this country. It is of little conſequence to the public what were the intentions of a few honeſt but miſtaken men; they would have been but of little avail, but muſt ſoon have fallen before the united efforts of the multitude, whoſe views were probably miſchievous from the beginning. Of theſe views there can be no doubt, they are proved by the avidity with which they adopted not only the propoſitions of the French Republic, but their couching thoſe Propoſitions in the new fangled language warm from the mint of thoſe word-mongers; which muſt be *new*, becauſe it was to explain what was never heard of; and *unintelligible*, becauſe it belonged to a ſyſtem that never before entered the moſt heated brain.

That

That this idolof their affection ſhould be the object of their imitation we muſt have believed, had they not made ſo full a confeſſion; but having done ſo, we ſhould oppoſe them with the ſame firmneſs as if they had made the moſt unequivocal declaration that their intentions were to tranſport the French Convention to St. James's, and there give it every ſupport in their power. Thus ſituated, let us conſider what would have been our feelings had they ſucceeded; would it have been the object of *our* adoration, ſhould *we* wiſh to ſupport a government where the order of the day was terror, whoſe ſecurity was to be maintained, by enforcing the doctrine of dead men's, telling no tales; which firſt declares, that all property belonged to the ſtate, and then, conſiſtent herewith, ſeizes the wealthy, diveſts them of their riches, and cuts them off, as the moſt certain way of preventing their complaints—that tears infants from the breaſts, and plunges them into the ſea, becauſe their parents were unreaſonable enough to be diſſatisfied, leſt, nurtured by ſuch food, they ſhould become vipers that might ſting the ſtate,—that fired off hundreds from the cannons mouth and gulliotined thouſands becauſe ſome, in the town they reſided in, differed from this government in ſentiments and reſiſted ſuch a torrent of iniquity; —that cuts off multitudes for daring, againſt all

laws human and divine, to adminiſter to the wants of their parents, huſbands, and wives, who had fled to foreign countries, under the order of government, and this by conveying to them their own property;—that depopulated whole towns, deluging them in blood;—that eſtabliſhed Courts of Juſtice conducted by infallible Judges, whoſe perceptions were ſo acute, whoſe integrity was ſo unimpeached, and whoſe lenity was ſo undoubted, that formal evidence was unneceſſary; and where a declaration from the Judge that his mind was convinced of the priſoner's guilt, was ſufficient to conſign him to inſtant deſtruction; whoſe executioners made a part of the Court, and who ſtood prepared to execute what they had ſo humanely determined; who had by degrees denied, firſt, the exiſtence of a Providence, and then a God; and having diſcharged the people from every reſtraint but their own, let looſe twenty-four millions upon each other, preſcribing no bounds to their ferocity but what would interfere with their authority.

A multitude thus prepared, acting by the impulſe of paſſion unreſtrained, what might not be expected from them? Indulge the utmoſt flight of fancy, ſuppoſe every thing that the warmeſt imagination can conceive, the deeds which they have

have done are ſtill beyond our view; a ruined land deluged in blood, where every fine feeling of the heart is eradicated, every principle of honor and honeſty deſtroyed, the nature of man ſubverted, now differing little from the tyger but by the number of his legs, muſt be a horrid ſpectacle; and yet let any unprejudiced man declare, if this portrait of the modern French is ſurcharged.

Experience alone could convince us that Britons, poſſeſſing a conſtitution which makes them the admiration of the whole world, ſhould for a moment entertain a wiſh to barter it for that under which our neighbours now groan; and yet what elſe could have been the conſequence of that cloſe imitation at which the oppoſition aimed.

The French ſet out with declaring that a reformation of the Royal Government they then poſſeſſed was their utmoſt wiſh. Is a trace of it now remaining? and yet it is generally believed that the Notables were ſincere in their declarations. But did they ſtop here? their conſtitution and themſelves are no more; and this in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time as to be incredible, when their numbers are conſidered. And have we any reaſon to expect that our fate would have been different, if we like them had thrown off that reſtraint, by which alone

any government can be maintained? Their grievances were great; the enormous expences of a diſſipated and luxurious court, added to that conduct of the great which ſuch an example would naturally excite, preſſed hard upon the lower orders of ſociety, and made their condition inſufferable; but of what have *we* to complain?—that our parliaments laſt ſeven rather than three or one year, and that they are choſen by one thouſand rather than by ten. A glorious reaſon this for putting ſuch a ſtake to ſuch a riſque. For ſhame my fellow ſubjects; before we ſtir one ſtep, let us pauſe a moment, and ſee what would be the conſequence of the propoſed alteration.

With regard to the firſt objection, what ſhould we gain by ſhortening of parliaments, but accumulated evil. Does any good ſubject, who has witneſſed the proceedings of a popular election, (and ſuch is propoſed) wiſh a more frequent repetion of them. Do not thoſe feuds and animoſities which they almoſt conſtantly produce, often occupy the whole ſpace between elections? And what would the conſequence be, of their being ſhortened. It is urged that it would totally deſtroy them. But how? If Treaſury influence is conſtantly operating, it is worth a Member's while to bribe his electors in proportion to the length of time he

is

is to be under it's influence, and of courſe, can equally afford to ſpend ſeven hundred pounds for a ſeven years' ſeat, or one hundred for a one year's ſeat.

But Annual Parliaments, it is ſaid, would be too ſhort for a Miniſter to manœuvre in, nor could they give a price that would be worth the attention of a Member of Parliament, and thus would corruption be eradicated. This reaſoning comes with an ill grace from thoſe, who upon every other occaſion are declaiming that every man has his price, that all men are corruptible, and all Miniſters corruptors, and that the only points to be ſettled between them are, the ſpecies and the quantum; and that one reaſon that Parliaments ſhould be annual is, that in our days corruption is refined ſo much that even the price of a ſingle vote is ſettled. We cannot be cenſured with the want of candour in admitting the force of theſe arguments, and then inſiſting upon them as an unanſwerable objection to ſhortening the duration of Parliament; for if the price of a day is ſettled, that of three hundred and ſixty-five may readily be found. Every calculation that experiment will juſtify muſt be made upon men as they are, not as they ſhould be. That men are too generally ſubject to corruption they admit, ſince to correct this evil does their propoſition come.

So

So long therefore as Miniſters have the power of corruption in their hands, and men the deſire of being corrupted, in vain do we propoſe a cure for this evil. If Oppoſition have a remedy for it, they will exhibit an unequivocal proof of their patriotiſm by divulging it, and in return, I will pledge myſelf, that not only Adminiſtration, but what they will like better, the whole body of the people, ſhall join them in confining Parliament to any point they ſhall name. But ſhortening it without leſſening corruption, which as things now are muſt be clearly the caſe, will be only increaſing the inconveniences, without, in the ſmalleſt degree, obtaining the propoſed advantages: on this account therefore I contend that Septennial Parliaments are preferable to Annual, and ought not to be abandoned for them. But ſtill we are told that corruption may be deſtroyed, and the inconveniences of elections avoided; and in proof of this we are referred to the Common Council of London, as ſimilar to our Commons Houſe of Parliament. Allow me one ſmall diſtinction and which cannot be denied, and you ſhall make all the uſe you pleaſe of the reſt. The corporation of London have not their hands in the public treaſury, or, long ere this, the citizens would have had cauſe to lament the frequency of their elections. This diſtinction muſt therefore be removed

moved, before the parallel can be admitted, and this I conceive, muſt exiſt ſo long as ſuch an immenſe ſum of money muſt be levied on the ſubject and conveyed into the hands of the public creditor, or ſo long as an executive power is neceſſary to carry on the affairs of government, which muſt be ſo long as there is any government at all. While the reſtraining power remains in the hands of the Commons, and woe be to the man that ſhall live to ſee it removed, the executive power muſt poſſeſs the concurrence of a majority in it; and while Adminiſtration exert their influence only ſo far, as to ſecure an attendance or a majority in their favour, where the cabal of party, on any popular queſtion, or the exertions of men deſirous of filling their places, might deprive them of it, is perhaps neceſſary, and where corruption exceeds theſe bounds it becomes an evil that cannot long exiſt; the good ſenſe of the nation will, as it ever has done, correct it. Of this every Miniſter is conſcious; and while they with juſtice inſiſt that government cannot be carried on, while the balance is ſuſpended in perfect equilibrium, they will be careful leſt too great a preponderance ſhould unſeat them,

But a better ſecurity than this is propoſed by the frequent exerciſe of the voters rights.

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The fear of expulſion will operate upon the Members *minds* and conſequently their *actions*. What uniformly has been, may fairly be argued as what will be, under ſimilar circumſtances: It will be acknowledged on all hands, that the city of London and borough of Southwark are as independant as any part of the kingdom, and where men exerciſe their rights as freely; let us ſee therefore what has been their conduct on ſuch occaſions. I have lived long enough to remember near three whole Parliaments, during which two of the city Members voted on each ſide of the queſtion, with but a few exceptions. Did an appeal to the conſtituents make any alteration? No; they expreſſed their diſapprobation by chooſing the ſame men again. During a period not much ſhorter, Mr. Thrale, and Sir Joſeph Mawby ſat for the Borough; who were the whole time as firm pillars to each ſide of the Houſe as their conſequence would allow. Common juſtice muſt acknowledge they were conſiſtent; and ſo were their conſtituents, who regularly returned them as often as an opportunity was afforded of exerciſing their judgments, with this difference, that *they* were conſiſtently inconſiſtent. Thus much for frequently recurring to the conſtituents, as producing virtue in the elected. The electors opinions are frequently altered of their Member during a ſeſſions, on his refuſing

refuſing to make ſome of their connections exciſemen or cuſtom-houſe officers, but ſeldom I believe from any diſcovery made of an alteration in the Member's political creed. That candidate is generally choſen who is moſt likely to be uſeful to the conſtituents in any way rather than politically, but, I believe but ſeldom in this. For theſe reaſons I think that ſhortening the duration of Parliament would be an evil, and therefore is not to be wiſhed.

Let us now ſee what would be the conſequence of extending the right of voting, The remedies are as various as the opinions of the reformers; conſiderable difficulty will therefore ariſe in diſcuſſing this ſubject; for after combating one opinion with ſucceſs, another will ariſe, which will be ſucceeded by another, and ſo on, until we muſt yield to fatigue rather than to conviction. I think the faireſt way of conducting the argument will be, to conſider the two extremes; the ſpace being the wideſt between them, will conſequently be the moſt conſpicuous. We muſt then oppoſe the man of real property of forty ſhillings per annum who now votes, with the man who claims under his perſonal Liberty only. No man is more free to confeſs the importance of the latter claim than myſelf; and if this could be endangered by our preſent method, I ſhould not become it's advocate;

but this appears to me not to be the caſe; for while the freeholder poſſeſſes his perſonal freedom *in common* with the reſt, no injury can be done to *them* in which *he* will not participate: they have therefore his perſonal intereſt (the ſtrongeſt of all motives) for their ſecurity. That the Free-holders or Landholders ſhould chooſe the Law-makers of every country appears reaſonable, becauſe they are the only permanent or conſtant proprietors of it, compared with whom all others may be conſidered as tranſient or fluctuating, who being capable of decamping with all their treaſure at pleaſure, are not bound to remain and protect that country, either from the attacks of foreign enemies, or the effects of thoſe tumults which laws improperly made or executed may raiſe.

Our Reformers are ſilent in behalf of a deſcription of men who ſeem to have a much better claim than the mere Potwabbler, who in addition to his claims has that of a great *property* at ſtake, a property which more than any other is connected with the proſperity of the country. I ſhall ſurely be anticipated when I mention the Stockholder; yet he finds no champion in his cauſe, becauſe we are told that to-morrow he may ſell out and leave the country if he pleaſes; and why may not any man not bound to the ſoil do the ſame? Although his

his funds may be ſomewhat longer in realizing, it may be done; there is no legal or natural force that compels his ſtay; and yet I do not remember to have heard any reformer propoſe that the funds ſhould give a right of voting, though the holders, in common with every other inhabitant, have their perſonal liberty and that of their families to plead: the reaſon which excludes them is obvious, but not ſtronger than that againſt the Potwabbler, who is not a freeholder.

It is the glory of this land that the Law-makers are thoſe who are to ſubmit to them, which could not be the caſe if they were perſons that could inſtantlybe gone, and leave others to groan under them: the permanent inhabitant therefore can alone be the proper Law-maker or the perſon to delegate them, which is the ſame thing. But why, it may be aſked, this amazing delicacy for the Cottager? Is his ſituation in particular likely to be mended by his participating in this right, or will the country at large be benefited by laws made by leſs intelligent legiſlators than the preſent, or are more wiſe ſenators likely to be choſen by leſs qualified voters? for though it is perfectly true that we all bring the ſame knowledge into the world, it is equally ſo, that we do not carry the ſame through life, and that it is education and connec-

tions that make the difference; conſequently that the beſt educated and connected are generally the moſt intelligent, and therefore the beſt judges of the requiſites to form a ſenator. Mathematicians are more likely to chooſe a good Board of Longitude than Farmers, and by the ſame rule, men who have read and heard ſomething of Laws and Politics, are better calculated to judge of the requiſites neceſſary to form a good Member of Parliament, than men that want theſe advantages; therefore Members choſen by them bid fairer to diſcharge their duty well. The probability of an able Houſe of Commons is then on the ſide of our preſent mode.

But we are told, that it is not the Abilities but the Integrity of the Members, that is defective: is this likely to be mended by the propoſed alteration? Does not ſelf love prompt us to approve in others, what we poſſeſs ourſelves? Even the enormity of our vices leſſen in our eyes, by beholding them in others; and it is difficult to withhold our approbation from thoſe who adminiſter to our eaſe, by leſſening the remonſtrances of our conſciences. Hence I apprehend the old adage, that a man is known by his company, which is always thoſe of his choice, and therefore like himſelf: What muſt then be a Houſe of Commons choſen by

by Cottagers, Labourers, and Law Mechanics?— preciſely what we ſee *them* to be, generally ignorant, and too frequently debauched with thoſe vices peculiar to a ſtation where education has been neglected. Would ſuch a Parliament be more virtuous than the preſent? I truſt not. We need not here reſt on theory, a neighbouring nation has recently given us a fatal example. No body of men was ever, I believe, choſen by ſo general a ſuffrage, and never were ſuch banditti met beneath one roof. Of this their whole conduct is one continued proof. There were among them men of quick natural parts, and a few with literary talents; but the number was ſo ſmall as only to make the horde more miſchievous. The remainder of this aſſembly were preciſely ſuch as their conſtituents would be likely to ſend, and the effect they produced in the aſſembly deſerves our moſt ſerious attention. Unable from the want of ideas to form any plan of action for themſelves, they became the tools of artful ambitious men, who taking advantage of their ignorance, moulded them to their purpoſe, blinding them by deceptious arguments, or urging them to tumult and riot, as the cauſe required. Ever willing blindly to follow their leaders, who by turns governed them in proportion to their own power and influence, they ſtuck at nothing. Truth, honor, juſtice, and humanity were no longer

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any barriers to meaſures, which will blacken the page of hiſtory, probably beyond the credulity of poſterity : and yet is there any thing extraordinary in theſe acts of an aſſembly thus conſtructed and thus choſen? on the contrary are they not effects naturally flowing from ſuch cauſes?

Few men I believe are hardy enough to juſtify the proceedings of the French National Aſſembly in general, whoſe conduct has put decency and humanity to the bluſh; and yet there are not wanting ſome among us, who, while they are aſhamed openly to avow it, are, by every ſecret means, endeavouring to make our Parliament to differ from it only in name; and if we are to judge of them by the language they have held in their aſſemblies, even this diſtinction would not long be found. Of theſe *worſt* becauſe *ſecret* enemies to the public peace, we cannot be too much aware. Every thing is at ſtake, their end once gained every thing dear to us is in *requiſition*, and we muſt hold our Property, Connections, Liberty, and even Life itſelf, at the will of a ſet of miſcreants, who, deaf to the calls of humanity, are governed only by their intereſt, and this would naturally lead them to put us beyond the power of cenſuring that injuſtice, by which, like ſo many vultures, they had flown upon our property.

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The very eaſy manner in which this would be done, may in many inſtances be ſeen, by the proceedings of the National Aſſembly, who after they had ſeized a man's whole property, diſpatched him through fear of future retribution; yet finding themſelves ſtill inſecure from ſome future reckoning, they cut off root and branch, exterminating whole families at a time.

We muſt not here be told that theſe were not the acts of the Aſſembly, but of ſome blood-thirſty men among them; for we reply, that if the ſanction of the majority does not prove it the act of the whole, we are at a loſs to know what does, and for this we need only refer to their own decrees, publiſhed under their own authority. But for argument ſake we will admit that thoſe bloody acts to which we allude, were congenial only to thoſe monſters that alternately governed in that Aſſembly: Is the queſtion altered? If the body is ſo conſtructed as to admit the will of one to govern the reſt againſt the convictions of their own judgments, and in conſequence, to give their ſanctions to acts they diſapprove, what is it but a government beginning and ending in the will of one man? which to my conception is as compleat a deſpotiſm as words can deſcribe, made ſtill more miſchievous by being exerciſed under the ſemblance of a free

free government. Thus have the French been deluded, and thus would many of our Modern Reformers delude us.

There is a curious circumſtance which I do not recollect to have heard noticed; it is this—that very early in that Aſſembly, they declared, that all the property of every individual was the property of the ſtate, which had a right to call for the whole or any part of it for it's defence, whenever it ſhould be neceſſary, of which neceſſity they were the judges; and therefore that every poſſeſſion that any man enjoyed, he did ſo, by the forbearance of the ſtate, and for which he muſt hold himſelf obliged to that ſtate. When therefore he was called upon to ſurrender it he had no cauſe for complaint; and leſt we ſhould miſunderſtand their meaning in this very extraordinary poſition, they immediately proceeded, and have uniformly continued to act upon it to this moment.

I truſt every man muſt ſee, that this is the Prime and Fundamental Doctrine, upon which Deſpotiſm reſts, and conſequently that an Abſolute Monarch holding this language, would be natnral; but that a ſet of men who had recently murdered their's, becauſe they ſuppoſed he had acted upon this principle, ſhould immediately promulge it as the foundation

foundation of a popular government, they were then about to eſtabliſh, would ſurpaſs all belief, did not the proceedings of that Aſſembly prove, that however glaring the inconſiſtency, it was not too great for them to atchieve. The difference between the conduct of the Britiſh Houſe of Commons and this Aſſembly of France is apparent, nor can any man heſitate one moment to which the preference is due; yet are we called upon not only to pauſe, but to declare in favor of that which ſtands ſo much in the ſhade. We ſhall do well to pauſe, when a little attention will ſhew the choice we ought to make: there muſt be ſome very prominent feature that creates the difference; they are both, in ſome degree at leaſt, Popular Aſſemblies, they are both choſen by the people, as a counterpoiſe to that influence, which wealth gives to the rich and noble, and one of them to that of the crown. In both they actually have theſe effects; ſo far they are ſimilar; and yet in the manner of attaining theſe ends, never were two bodies more unlike: in one, every thing that proceeds from juſtice and prudence ſtrikes our eye; in the other every thing that can outrage both is ſeen. The difference muſt then ariſe from the characters that compoſe them, and it is evidently the caſe, that this difference of character proceeds from their Conſtituents, who very naturally wiſh to be,

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repreſented by men like themſelves. In every country, the ignorant greatly out-number the intelligent, and in France, more than in England, owing to that blindneſs in which they have politically been kept. When theſe become Electors, from what deſcription of men would they naturally make their choice? undoubtedly from themſelves, for intelligence in a candidate would be no recommendation to them; it would be a qualification of which they could form no idea, or if they could, it would ſo much reprove their ignorance, (which they had not yet been able to deſpiſe), as to be no recommendation to them, and of courſe, the man who had ingratiated himſelf into their favor, either by an ignorance like their own, or by meanly ſacrificing to their humours or their vices, would become the ſucceſsful candidate for their ſuffrage. The latter becomes the blots of hiſtory, while the former, being proper tools for ſuch characters to work with, aſſiſt in ſanctioning their horrid deeds.

I take this to be a fair portrait of the National Aſſembly: let us endeavour now to be as ſucceſsful, in producing a likeneſs of the Houſe of Commons, whoſe features being more uniform, muſt be the more difficult picture to draw. They are likewiſe choſen by the people, but by a more intelligent part of them, who attend, in many inſtances,

inſtances, to the recommendation of the ſtill more informed. The conſequence we ſee is, that our Houſe of Commons is, at leaſt, an aſſembly of gentlemen, whoſe education and habits fit them for the poſt of Senators, and the acts which they produce, ſhew the neceſſity there is for thoſe requiſites which they poſſeſs; for while thus qualified, they are enabled to aſſiſt the executive government, by the exertion of their abilities in promoting the good of their fellow ſubjects; they with equal ſucceſs can reſtrain that power, when attempting to injure them. Many inſtances can be produced to prove that ambition, or other unworthy motives, have produced acts of Parliament, that have diſgraced it, and every ſeſſion teems with inſtances of it's want of intelligence, in framing thoſe which as ſoon as they are paſſed ſtand in need of others to correct them.

But this only proves that Members are men, and therefore fallible, and that the ingenuity and induſtry of thoſe whom theſe acts reſtrained were great. Until a higher order of beings can be procured, to legiſlate for us, we muſt be ſatisfied with the exertions of men, ſuch as they are, whoſe acts like themſelves are imperfect; the correction of errors muſt ever therefore make up a conſiderable part of parliamentary buſineſs, and where this is properly

attended to, we ſhould be contented. It is highly unreaſonable in us to complain that ſo much of our repreſentatives time is employed in correcting thoſe errors, which are our own.

After this comparative view, we may fairly truſt the impartial judgment of every candid mind, the merit of each is too widely different for any to miſtake; and as I conceive it clear, that the numbers who are ſatisfied with our Parliament ſuch as it is, are the majority, and as theſe have a right to decide, thoſe who are diſſatisfied ſhould retire. Upon no principle have they a right to remain, enjoying the protection of a government which they are endeavouring to overturn, and rendering thoſe uneaſy by their oppoſition who find themſelves ſecure and happy under it. But a narrow channel of water ſeparates between this country, and that which is ſo much the idol of their worſhip. Thither let them repair. They will find their friends with arms open to receive them, and may *there* by the avowal of thoſe principles which *here* they dare not own, be admitted to the privileges of citizens, and entitled to all the bleſſings of ſubjects, ſecured in every thing dear to them by the virtuous exertions of the National Aſſembly. The rebellious ſons of a ſoſtering kingdom like Great Britain muſt be

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a noble acquiſition for France, and we ſhall, I hope, ſupport the loſs without murmuring.

But the virtuous reformers of our day, poſſeſſing ſo much of the milk of human nature, and ſo firmly attached both to their fellow-ſubjects, and their native country, cannot bear to leave them in this imperfect ſituation, but are willing to make one effort more, to awaken them from the ſtupor into which they are fallen. We are therefore told that a Parliament choſen under influence is not, nor can be virtuous. We wiſh for virtue as much as they, being equally convinced, that no good can be done without it, and with attention therefore liſten to any arguments that will tend to ſtrengthen it.

They propoſe then, not only to extend the ſuffrage to every male, (and if ſo why not to every female I cannot tell, as they have an equal right to perſonal ſecurity), but that theſe ſhall poll by ballot, which would entirely put their maſters and landlords behind the curtain while they voted. This propoſition ſavours ſo ſtrong of the old gentlewoman, that before I give a ſerious anſwer to it I muſt once more become an advocate for the fair ſex, and hope that if the queſtion for univerſal ſuffrage is carried, every man may take his wife in his

his hand, and half a dozen daughters if ſo fortunate as to have them; it would increaſe his conſequence, and if it did his influence, ſo long as that was not the influence of the Miniſter or his Landlord, he will have no objection to that; for let men rail as they pleaſe againſt power and influence, it is thoſe that are not in their own poſſeſſion only that are the objects of their diſpleaſure. Nothing is more common than to hear men exclaim againſt power, but where is the man to be found that complains he has too much, until by abuſing it the ſmart convinces him againſt his will that it might have been as ſafe in other hands. We muſt however, I believe, apologize to the ladies for wiſhing to leave them at home upon this occaſion, by ſaying, they have only avoided a day of tumult but little adapted to their delicate nerves, and hoping that they will be conſoled with the company of their huſbands at home, unleſs they ſhould be ſo unfortunate as to be freeholders, whoſe numbers bear a ſmall proportion to the whole.

With reſpect to influence, it would be diffuſed, but not leſſened in the ſmalleſt degree. At preſent the Landlord influences his Farmers, who attend his cavalcade to the huſtings, and vote as he does. In the other caſe, the Landlord would ſummon

ſummon his Farmers, they would inform their Labourers of the will of their Landlords, and they would altogether be of one company. The influence of the Landlord would be clearly the ſame, or the only difference would be, that in one caſe there would be one hundred votes, in the other one thouſand, in both, wealth and conſequence would chooſe, and the extenſion of ſuffrage would not make the ſmalleſt difference, except as it would increaſe expence, tumult, and ill blood, a train that ſhould not be admitted but upon a better plea than that of the expectation of leſſening influence, with every probability againſt it.

Let us now ſee if voting by ballot has a better claim to our approbation. At preſent the Landlord ſolicits the vote of his Tenant, who promiſes him in behalf of Mr. A.—For him therefore he muſt vote, or riſque the diſpleaſure of his Landlord, and be pointed at as a man devoid of truth; in the other caſe he promiſes to vote for Mr. A. and then votes for Mr. B. By this means he is probably ſcreened from both the above inconveniences, and has only one enemy to ſilence inſtead of two, ſubmitting only to the trifling inconvenience of *feeling* that he ought to have them all.

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Without waiting here to conſider under which circumſtances the voters ſituation is moſt enviable, we muſt aſk where is the man, who would wiſh to have his repreſentative choſen by a ſet of men, devoid of truth and honor. Whatever other cauſes may be ſupported by this mode, that of virtue certainly could not, as it reſpects the voters, nor is the morality of the Members likely to be improved by it. Voters of this ſtamp themſelves would not be likely to revere a virtue in others to which they were total ſtrangers, nor would they probably, as before obſerved, prefer a character which would ſo ſeverely reproach their own; not to mention that total uncertainty in which every candidate muſt be, even on the day of election, which would have a natural tendency to deter any man of independant fortune, who had no object in view but the good of his country, from offering his ſervice.

Under all theſe circumſtances, of what deſcription of men would our Houſe of Commons be made up?—Certainly not of thoſe leſs liable to miniſterial influence than the preſent, and conſequently not more likely to ſpeak the ſentiments of the nation, when that ſhould be in oppoſition.

What is therefore recommended to us, under the

the ſpecious name of reformation, would certainly not be ſo; and this we are ſolicited to receive in lieu of a conſtitution which has ever made us the envy of all nations. While Britons remain true to it, we truſt no earthly power can ſhake it. We are juſtly warranted in the expectation, from a review of thoſe ſituations from which, in the memory of many of us, it has reſcued us. A very ſhort retroſpect will preſent to our view this little iſland at actual war with the greater part of Europe, while the remainder maintained a neutrality not leſs miſchievous; bending at the ſame time beneath a load of debt, far beyond what one of the moſt able ſtateſmen had declared, we could poſſibly ſupport; yet from all theſe difficulties have we extricated ourſelves,* have reduced our debt, ſeen our funds nearly as high as ever they were, and aſſumed a conſequence among the nations of the earth that has aſtoniſhed them, and all this after thirteen provinces had been amputated from the empire. The cleareſt conviction only could have made us conceive this poſſible. Surely there muſt be ſomething too valuable in ſuch a conſtitution to be treated with levity or bartered for an expement ſo futile; on the contrary ſhould we not naturally expect to find Britons rallying round

* Soon after the American War.

the conſtitution with a zeal and ardour bordering on enthuſiaſm, determined to defend it at all hazards againſt every ſacrilegious hand that might dare to approach it.

That government muſt be good, where perſonal liberty and property to any extent are ſecured, while the ſtate at the ſame time grows rich: that this is a juſt deſcription of our own, we may prove by referring to the experience of every ſubject for the former, and for the latter, to thoſe various and extenſive ſubſidies which we have been enabled ſo lately to grant in lieu of Britiſh blood: the complaints of diſſatisfied men weigh not a feather in oppoſition to this; they only prove, that men of ſombre tempers ſee through a cloudy medium, or, that ſelf-intereſt, malice, and ill-nature, have not left our globe. I believe we may fairly put the queſtion upon this iſſue—when our Reformers can preſent us with a conſtitution as rational as our own, and that has ſtood the teſt of ages, improving as it has advanced, till it has reached, perhaps, as high a pitch of perfection as humanity is capable of, we ſhall be ready to treat with them for the exchange, but as our own has arrived ſo near this ſummit, nothing ſhort of it merits our attention. As a regard for our happineſs is the profeſſed motive of our Reformers, and as every one is the beſt judge

judge of what will promote this, we will not make ſo ungrateful a return to all the pains they have taken in promoting our intereſt againſt our wills, as to be inſenſible of our obligation, but will point out a method, by which we conceive they will beſt anſwer the end propoſed, and that is, by leaving us in the quiet poſſeſſion, of what we feel to conſtitute our trueſt happineſs; let them call us inſenſible or ungrateful, or by any other epithet which they think their clearer diſcernment warrants, only allow us to *know* when we *feel* ourſelves happy and to be anxious to remain ſo.

Although I truſt enough has been ſaid to ſhew the inexpediency of attending to the propoſals of our Reformers, the argument is far from being exhauſted; and one objection in particular muſt not be omitted: agreeable to the propoſition, that in proportion to the importance of the ſubject ſhould be the attention with which it is treated; as reaſon is that property of our nature, by which alone we can judge, and as paſſion is ſo materially concerned in blinding it, it follows, that no time is ſo unfit for forming a right judgment as when the paſſions are moſt inflamed, or in other words, as when we are the leaſt reaſonable; hence it follows, that a thing highly proper in itſelf, may be inex-

pedient, from being improperly timed; now can the record of the moſt faithful memory produce a period within a century ſo improper on this account as the preſent, for propoſing an alteration in government, when in a neighbouring nation twenty four millions of it's inhabitants have run mad on this ſubject, calling upon the whole world to imitate their example, to which ſo many in this country have lent an attentive ear, become converts to their faith, and are endeavouring to diſſeminate their principles wherever they go. If there is any thing wrong in our Conſtitution, (and where is a perfect government?) the moſt lenient hand ſhould be applied, and not the rude and violent one of modern reform, made ſavage by what has lately been experienced on the Continent. The bright mirror ſo elegantly deſcribed by a late writer, is of too much value and too delicate a ſtructure to admit of ſuch treatment without injury. It's imperfections are mere air-bubbles, that prevent not the reflexion of a perfect image, which while they prove the imperfection, at the ſame time ſhew, that for every uſeful purpoſe it is ſufficient to ſatisfy a reaſonable mind, and ſurely evince the inexpediency of admitting any experiment that would endanger the plate. The time of tumult is of all others the worſt for beginning a reform; egregious indeed muſt be thoſe defects, which

which would juſtify our making choice of it; the exertions of the wiſeſt heads and beſt hearts are neceſſary for the purpoſe, and theſe exerciſed upon the moſt calm and deliberate inveſtigation. What is then to be expected when the rage of party, in the hour of diſſatisfaction, undertakes this buſineſs? The Conſtitutional Tree, pruned by ſuch hands, might bleed to death, but would furniſh little hope of putting forth better ſhoots than thoſe that had been lopped off. More wild and luxuriant they might be, but having been cut to the quick they would grow from below the ſcion, and produce the fruit of the ſtock rather than the ingraff, leaving us, as the reward of our induſtry, to gather crabs rather than apples. Common prudence dictates that we ſhould be ſatisfied with a Conſtitution where all the great and leading features are good, while little imperfections, like moles in ſome female faces, but ſet off it's general beauty.

Conſidering the imbecility of our nature and the difficulty there is in reſtraining the paſſions and inclinations of the multitude, the imperfections of government remain no longer wonderful. Even in a Theocracy, where the laws muſt be perfect, numberleſs were the complaints made againſt it. While the manna was in their mouths they complained that it was not meat, and where every incentive

incentive to a right conduct was employed ſhort of irreſiſtible impulſe.

The hiſtory of the Jews is little more than a continued ſeries of rebellion and complaints, till even the patience of a Father was wearied out, and they were left as monuments to ſucceeding ages, of the inſtability and perverſeneſs of the human mind. That mere men ſhould ſucceed worſe in their attempts to legiſlate, is nothing wonderful. In proportion to the powers they poſſeſs, ſhould be our expectations of their ſucceſs, and with that which all *admire* we ſhould be *ſatisfied*.

Perhaps no part of our Conſtitution is more admirable than this, that it contains within itſelf a principle of reform, which will ever operate upon a proper occaſion, and which does away the neceſſity of thoſe convulſions with which a revolution is generally attended; for though a Miniſter may ſtretch his power to a certain extent without the people's complaining, evidently becauſe they do not feel it as an evil that merits it, let him advance but one ſtep farther, that reſponſibility which is ever before his eyes, will become a check, and ſhould weakneſs or temerity tempt him to proceed, it muſt inevitably prove fatal to him.

Thus

Thus does he ſtake his perſonal ſecurity as a pledge for the liberty of the ſubject, and leave us nothing either to lament or fear. If correction is ever neceſſary let us wait for the hour of cool and diſpaſſionate reaſon.

It is indeed certain that Miniſters never think the preſent time proper for reform; but it is equally ſo, that there are times which in the eyes of ſober reaſon are not ſo. Though Miniſters will naturally be found in oppoſition to the propoſition whenever made; yet ſuch oppoſition does not prove that the queſtion ſhould be carried againſt them. The time ſhould be conſidered, independent of all ſuch conſiderations. Men, before they are in office, ſpeak like men, with the common prepoſſeſſions of men, and when they become Miniſters they ſpeak like Miniſters, with all the prejudices of office about them. We ſhould no longer be ſurpriſed that our preſent Miniſter ſpeaks a language different from that he held before he was ſo; when will the wonder of man ceaſe to be exerciſed on an object that has never varied? Have not all Miniſters done the ſame; but at the ſame time that it does not prove they were always right, neither does it, that they have been always wrong, though acting under an influence that ſhould make us watchful. When they object to the time

time for no better reaſon than that it is preſent, or, that they feel no inconvenience from our preſent ſituation, we may ſmile at their *reaſoning*, and follow our *own*; but when their voice is in uniſon with common ſenſe and ſound reaſon, we ſhould not refuſe to hear, becauſe the Miniſter's voice is in the chorus. His dictum ſhould not be ſervilely admitted as truth, on the one hand, without examination, nor ſhould the voice of Oppoſition be received as concluſive againſt him on the other. Men equally wiſe and honeſt entertain very different opinions, at diffent times, and under different circumſtances. The Man's, and the Miniſter's ideas, may vary much, though in the ſame perſon, without any impeachment of his integrity.

Without therefore calling upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ſupport, what ſome years ago Mr. Pitt propoſed, let us conſider whether alterations in circumſtances do not fairly juſtify his preſent conduct. That which would very properly employ his abilities in times of profound peace, may be a total miſapplication of them, at a period like this; and what he then conſidered as a reform, may, by intervening circumſtances, now aſſume a different name.

In this, I believe, he would not be ſingular.

The

The very exiſtence of our Conſtitution now challenges our attention, and not the *minutiæ* of it's imperfections. It would be a criminal waſte of time to attend to theſe at preſent, when even much ingenuity is neceſſary to prove *their exiſtence.* To contract the duration of Parliament, or extend the right of voting, on which opinions vary much, at a certainty of agitating the paſſions, and at the riſque of exciting tumults in times like theſe, muſt be indiſcreet at leaſt, and when we conſider the characters and conduct of thoſe who wiſh it, clearly proved by their overt acts, would be highly criminal in any individual, and in a Miniſter unpardonable, who is therefore entitled to our thanks and ſupport, for the oppoſition he gives it. When theſe propoſitions can be attended to, with that coolneſs and deliberation which they require, it will be time enough to hear arguments in their ſupport, which from what has been already advanced, are not likely to prove concluſive; but under our preſent circumſtances, any propoſition for altering a government capable of extricating us from our difficulties, muſt be an act of inſanity, and the propoſer ſhould be conſidered as a lunatic; indeed he ſhould acknowledge himſelf indebted to our candour for the determination, it being more than probable, he could not arraign our juſtice if we

held him up as a traitor to his country, and aſſigned him to Newgate rather than Bedlam.

When Mr. Pitt firſt propoſed a Parliamentary Reform, it may be fairly argued he thought it ſuch, and that it might be obtained without riſque; he has lived to ſee the paſſions of mankind ſo inflamed, by unavoidable circumſtances, and the machinations of artful men, that it is no longer practicable, without ſuch danger as would far outweigh any advantage, to be gained by it. What would a wiſe man do under theſe circumſtances? preciſely what he does, declare that he no longer thinks it a Reformation, and give it his decided oppoſition. Is he to be charged with fickleneſs? By no means, the change is in our ſituation, not in him.

I wiſh to be clearly underſtood here; and do not mean to ſay, that he is juſtifiable upon the ſuppoſition of his ſaying that reform is neceſſary, and the time only improper, and, conſequently, when *this* ſhall alter, he is bound to appear as the friend and ſupporter of Reform, or act inconſiſtently with his original declaration; but, I would be underſtood to ſay, that he may no longer ſee it as a Reform at any time nor under any circumſtances likely to happen in his day, and yet be perfectly

perfectly conſiſtent. The abilities of Mr. Pitt at a very early period, compared with thoſe of his contemporaries, might be fairly expected to excite that vanity which would be allowed to more than a mediocrity of talents, urged by youthful blood; yet in all the abuſe that he has experienced I do not remember to have heard him charged with pretending to infallibility. Is it extraordinary therefore that time and experience ſhould produce that effect upon him, that they uniformly do upon the whole world? If he honeſtly ſpoke his ſentiments at the time, and acted upon them, he did well, and if he has ſeen cauſe to alter his opinion, and acts upon it, does he do ill? What would be the caſe if he had changed his opinion but not his actions? Then inconſiſtency would attach upon him with a vengeance, for one way he muſt be charged with inſincerity. When he made the firſt declaration, he might think that a Houſe of Commons, choſen by a lower order of voters than the preſent, might not be, what now by the example of the National Aſſembly he ſees they would be, (ſuppoſing him to have ever been a friend to the extenſion of voting); or he might ſuppoſe, that ſhorter Parliaments might be more virtuous than longer, but experience has taught him better. That knowledge with which his office has furniſhed him, joined to a longer acquaintance

with mankind, have ſhewn, that nothing but that degree of virtue which he has no where found, can reſcue them from the influence of corruption; and conſequently a change of Parliaments, is only a change of men, equally bad, and ſometimes worſe; which, ſo far from being an advantage to the ſubject, only burthens him with unneceſſary expence and trouble, without affording any benefit. With theſe ideas, (and they are perfectly natural) what muſt the conduct of the Miniſters be, conſiſtent with his pretenſions as an honeſt man; but ſtrenuouſly now to oppoſe what, before he was a Miniſter, he propoſed.

It certainly is no point of wiſdom to court a diſappointment and then complain. We are too apt to aſſume a right of judging what Adminiſtration ſhould be, and freely cenſure them for every thing we think a defect. By the few who ſucceed, we may fairly conclude, that no undertaking is more arduous than that of a Miniſter of State. While therefore their exertions are entitled to our candour, few ſtations have more reaſon to complain of that rigour, with which they are treated. If their emoluments are great, their labour and anxiety are not leſs; and if their fortunes are improved, the public are at leaſt equally benefited. A little more of that candour,

which

which we think right to exerciſe toward men in other ſtations, inſtead of that conſtant diſtruſt, and malevolence, with which we treat them, would be but prudent, as much of the good reſulting to them would recoil upon ourſelves; the chearful labourer being generally the moſt induſtrious and ſucceſsful. Their hands being thus ſtrengthened by our approbation, they would work with double *diligence*, and probably *ſucceſs*, while we on the other hand ſhould enjoy a pleaſure, which, though unknown to the Cynic, is to a noble mind beyond price. Clear as the advantage would be to us, from ſuch a conduct, it will, I fear, be difficult to inculcate the practice, becauſe our pride is concerned in reſiſting it. Men generally conclude, that they evince the ſuperiority of their judgment by detecting errors in that of others, not reflecting at the ſame time, that while nothing is more difficult than to improve upon the conduct of others, nothing is more eaſy than to diſcover their faults: yet every pigmy Politician thinks himſelf qualified to cenſure the conduct of the ableſt Stateſman that ever exiſted. It may however be worth their conſideration, that with the little probability of ſucceeding to their wiſh, they will *undoubtedly* incur the imputation of want of candour and good nature.

Could

Could we be prevailed upon to forbear playing at this unequal game, many of thoſe complaints would ceaſe, with which we now are goading Miniſters. The powers of the intelligent would be employed in aſſiſting rather than in thwarting them, and thus ſhould we reap the advantage of an accumulation of all the abilities in the kingdom. Theſe advantages might be drawn out to a great length; but as enough has been already ſaid, to fatigue the patience of the candid, and as little expectation can be entertained, of convincing thoſe who fight for victory rather than truth, I ſhall take my leave of the ſubject by obſerving that;—

If the Evils our preſent Reformers complain of, exiſt, they are not of ſufficient magnitude to juſtify the reſiſtance they make;

That the Remedies they propoſe are not likely to anſwer the End; And,

That if they were ſo, this is not the proper Time for making the Experiment.

Since

Since writing the above a thought has ſtruck me which may properly here be mentioned; if an additional motive is neceſſary to induce a confidence in the preſent Adminiſtration, a very cogent one ariſes from the conduct of the Oppoſition: they endeavour to diſtract the meaſures of Government, by alarming the fears and exciting the jealouſy of the common people, by inſinuating that they are the objects of miniſterial oppreſſion; and thus endeavour to make their cauſe popular, by adding this moſt numerous claſs to their intereſt. This is the tendency of all their ſpeeches in the Houſe of Commons, and from thence diſſeminated by their agents through the country.

The miſchievous tendency of this conduct is evident; for as ſuſpicion is ever a concomitant with ignorance, the poiſon flies on eagle's wings, and is received with equal avidity. The ſmalleſt effort to check this evil, is inſiſted on as an additional proof of their poſition. When tumultuous meetings preſent Petitions to Parliament on ſubjects which not one in a thouſand of thoſe that ſign them can form the leaſt idea, and theſe petitions meet the contempt they deſerve, inſtantly we hear, that the inſolence of the Miniſter rejects the prayer of the people, becauſe they are poor and low: theſe of courſe become irritated by ſuch repre-

repreſentations, and violence is the natural conſequence. What may not be expected from a multitude thus deceived? Yet this very multitude, if convinced that they were made the tools of a ſet of men, who uſed them to promote their own unworthy purpoſes, would be as violent againſt Oppoſition as they now are againſt Adminiſtration, nor would their violence be reſtrained with leſs difficulty, ſuch a two-edged ſword is the populace; which no wiſe or good man will handle but with the greateſt caution and prudence. The reſentment of every friend to the Conſtitution ſhould be rouſed againſt a ſet of men, who reſort to ſuch dangerous meaſures as appealing to the people, to ſupport the cauſe of Oppoſition. There is nothing novel in men's embracing a popular ſound, and applying it as the Catchword of their Party, however little it may ſuit their principles. In this they have two ends in view, to aſſume a merit they do not poſſeſs, and to brand their opponents with a ſtigma they do not merit. The unfairneſs of this procedure is obvious. The preſent Oppoſition are guilty of it to the higheſt degree. They aſſume the title of friends to peace. The concluſion they draw from hence is, that their oppoſers muſt be enemies to it. Thus prepared, they ſally throughout the country, with a petition for peace in their hands, and ſolicit the ſignature

of

of all who would not be conſidered as hoſtile to this prayer. The hook thus baited, muſt naturally be ſwallowed by all whoſe ſagacity does not penetrate the veil of their deception, and theſe muſt be few among the multitude. The next ſtep is, to preſent the Houſe of Commons with the fruits of their induſtry in a parchment long as their harangues, and ſtained from end to ſide by the unconſcious witneſſes of their deception. Is this Petition rejected? the Majority are ſtigmatized as the friends and ſupporters of every evil attendant on war, and the merit of ſeconding the humane wiſh of the people for peace is aſſumed to themſelves.

The public cannot be inſulted by a more barefaced miſrepreſentation than this. That all men, as ſuch, muſt prefer peace to war, is evident; Oppoſition and Adminiſtration are ſo far on equal ground: but that Adminiſtration have additional motives for the preference, may be inferred from the facility with which the duties of their office are diſcharged in the former. Who would wiſh to hold the helm amid the howling of the tempeſt, rather than in the ſtillneſs of a calm? Few men wiſh to become candidates for unneceſſary trouble and anxiety, which however muſt be the rewards of a Miniſter in time of war. The probability is

highly in favor of Miniſters wiſhing for peace; the proof of the contrary therefore fairly lies upon the Oppoſition, who, failing in this, muſt loſe the cauſe. Notwithſtanding the preſent Miniſter is held up as an enemy to peace and therefore obnoxious to the people, the truth of the caſe is, that no man can be ſuppoſed more anxious for peace than himſelf; becauſe no man can have ſo many motives for wiſhing it: but admitting that Oppoſition was equally ſincere in their wiſhes, (which is at leaſt doubtful) the caſe would ſtand thus:— All are equally deſirous for peace, but differ in the mode of procuring it.

I ſhall not here conſider the merits of thoſe arguments which have ſo recently been delivered in the Houſe of Commons on this ſubject; they have been heard, and determined by the Majority; but one circumſtance muſt not be omitted, becauſe it completely accounts for the conduct of the Oppoſition, and ſhews that far other motives than the love of peace actuates them. We hear that the Miniſter who carries on war, never makes a peace; our wonder then ceaſes at the clamour of his enemies for peace, who have uniformly his ſituation in view, as the object of their wiſhes. We will give them credit for their induſtry in purſuing their object, but we muſt have a better

reaſon

reaſon for diſmiſſing a Miniſter, than their deſire of filling his place, and when to attain this their end, they proceed the length of exciting tumults, we muſt conſider them as dangerous men, who are ſacrificing the public good to their own intereſt. With ſubmiſſion to theſe gentlemen's ſuperior judgment, we can ſee no objection to Mr. Pitt's making a peace. Is the man who has poſſeſſed the perfect confidence of the nation through ſuch trying circumſtances as the preſent, not proper to conduct their intereſt in a negotiation for peace? Or when the peace is made is he incapable of reſcuing us from the conſequences of an expenſive war, who has once in ſimilar circumſtances and with much leſs experience, extricated us to the aſtoniſhment of all the world? But we are told that the objection comes not from us, but from our enemies. This is curious. They are very *proper* judges of the Commiſſioner *they* may chooſe to ſend, and would ſmile at an objection *we* might make to him, and their objection to our Miniſter would certainly not be leſs extraordinary. Satisfied with the man we wiſh to appear in our behalf, we have nothing to do with our enemies opinion of him. It ſhould certainly be no recommendation to us, that he was well thought of by them, as this might poſſibly excite ſuſpicion in us, and would not fail to be a bone that Oppoſition would be glad to pick.

But for argument ſake we will admit the right of our enemies to chooſe our Miniſter. What reaſonable objection could they make to Mr. Pitt?—that he was adverſe to their intereſt, or in other words that he was a friend to this country? But why more adverſe to him than another, that was at the ſame time an honeſt man? Would not their objection have been as ſtrong againſt the late Lord Chatham, or any other able Miniſter engaged in the ſame cauſe? The truth is, that it is the office, and not the man, they object to, and to which objection not the leaſt attention is due from us. The language made uſe of by contending powers towards each other on an approaching peace differs widely from that they held to each other immediately before; but the object is the ſame, the conciliating language of friendſhip is now ſubſtituted for the ſword, but both are equally intended to gain all we can, and leave as little as poſſible in the power of our enemies. In this view the moſt honeſt, wiſe, and able man is the beſt Miniſter. When one better qualified in theſe particulars than Mr. Pitt can be found, we ſhall be wiſe to make choice of him; but in the mean time let us reſt ſatisfied with him as he is; I think we ſhall riſque nothing by the determination; the teſtimony of our enemies in our favour, ſhould be admitted as good evidence; and if the violent oppoſition of the French to him

is

is not ſuch I am at a loſs to know what is. We have in this country nothing to fear but from want of unanimity among ourſelves, and no man can give ſo unequivocal a proof of being our enemy as by endeavouring to leſſen it. We cannot be too much upon our guard againſt ſuch men. When we find a party endeavouring to inſtil into the minds of the people, a want of confidence in our Governors which will moſt effectually do this, we ſhould treat them with the indignation they merit; but when we detect them playing upon the ignorance of the multitude, and exciting them to tumult by hanging out falſe colours, we ſhould reſiſt them with an energy that muſt be felt in the breaſt of every true patriot. Nothing can have a worſe tendency than to perſuade the lower orders of the people that they have not that ſhare in the Government to which they are entitled, and that they are not attended to as the higher orders are; at the ſame time nothing is more falſe. In no Government of which hiſtory gives us any account was this ever leſs the caſe, for here there is one law for the high and low, adminiſtered by the ſame judges, and with equal juſtice; here it may truly be ſaid, that none are ſo high as to be above the reach of Law while none are ſo low as to be without it's protection. All other Governments of which long experience has made us proper judges,

have

have either fallen victims to their defects or remain poſſeſſed of many from which ours is clear. The Greeks and Romans, having ſtrutted their hour on the ſtage are no more, and with them their Conſtitutions are gone. The ſubjects of Deſpots groan under their iron rod, while the inhabitants of Republics are rending each other with inteſtine broils, the natural offspring of vaunted equality, while Britons, improving upon them all, are boaſting of a Conſtitution probably as perfect as the preſent ſtate of man can admit of, and with which we have only to be contented and happy.

FINIS.